

The Bogey of Double Allegiance

MOST REV. JOHN T. McNICHOLAS, O.P., S.T.M.

Archbishop of Cincinnati

Sermon preached in the Cathedral of St. Peter, Cincinnati, on the occasion of the observance of the sixth anniversary of the coronation of Pope Pius XI, and reprinted from the "Catholic Telegraph"

THE anniversary of the coronation of our Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, arouses the filial devotion of all Catholics. Knowing its real significance, they observe it in a spirit of religious loyalty. To those outside the Catholic Church its observance may seem uncalled for, and in a certain sense contrary to the spirit of our democratic country.

REJOICE OVER VICAR OF CHRIST

Catholics throughout the world rejoice today at the completion of the sixth year of the pontificate of our Holy Father, Pope Pius XI. There is reason for their rejoicing. Christ is to them the living God made Man. He established a Church. That Church speaks unerringly to all men of the things of their eternal salvation. Christ remains forever the head of that Church, having no successor. But He provided for the earthly government of that Church when He appointed Peter His first Vicar: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven" (Matt. xvi, 18-19). From Peter to Pius XI there has been an unbroken succession of Vicars of Christ. His Vicar is today, and has been throughout the ages, the bond of unity of all Christians and the only unifying principle by which all can be made one in Christ.

The Church of Cincinnati today, united to the Vicegerent of Christ on earth, Pope Pius XI, and to the Faithful of the whole world, sings its "Te Deum" of thanksgiving for the blessings bestowed upon mankind during the last six years.

THE PATH TO PEACE

The Saviour of the world is the Prince of Peace. His Vicegerent longs and prays for "the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ." He has pointed out to the governments of the world the only way of peace. In the universal religious confusion of our time his voice rings out in the commanding tone of Christ Himself, inviting all to enjoy the blessing of the peace of Christ in the one Fold of Christ.

The upheaval of the Eastern peoples, which would destroy every vestige of Christianity—a Christianity which for nearly a thousand years has been deprived of the guidance of Peter—elicits his paternal solicitude. With a father's love, he yearns to restore to all the Christians of the East the priceless heritage of peace and unity of which schism robbed them.

With the mind of the historian and theologian, he reviews the errors which four hundred years ago caused another great rift in the Christian family. Only those who know the heart of Pius XI realize how he loves all dissentient Christians, how he prays the Holy Ghost for their enlightenment and for their speedy return to the one Sheepfold of Christ.

In thanking God today for the blessing which Pope Pius XI has been to the Christian world, we, the children of the Church, recognize as our chief duty fervent prayer that God may preserve him and make him blessed upon the earth, and direct him, that he may both desire those things that are pleasing to God and perform them with all his strength.

SOURCE OF DISTRUST

Much of the uneasiness and distrust manifested toward the Catholic Church today is due to misinformation, or partial information, regarding the authority and office

of the Pope. Many fairminded men will tell you that they have no objection to the religious belief of Catholics, and are perfectly willing to grant them the widest liberty in its exercise, according to the constitution and traditions of our country, but that they are uncertain and uneasy about the allegiance of Catholics to an "alien sovereign"—the Pope! They seem apprehensive of possible contingencies which would oblige loyal Catholics to yield allegiance to the Pope at the price of disloyalty to their own country.

GROUNDLESS FEARS

These fears are absolutely groundless. There never can be a conflict in which American Catholics will be obliged to choose the Pope and reject their own country, so long as the United States is governed by its present constitution and its traditions of religious liberty. Should the United States, however—which God forbid!—become an anarchistic government and exercise the tyranny of a Russia or a Mexico, Catholics would then have to stand for the principle that the Church established by Christ has the right to live, and in its spiritual domain, the right to govern itself. The one-hundred-and-fifty-years' experience which our country furnishes proves that in every crisis, Catholics have not only been loyal, but they have gladly made sacrifices in excess of those demanded of them. It seems incredible that practical, fairminded men could be disturbed by an impossible theoretical disloyalty.

The position of the Catholic Church is very clear and simple. It is an organization founded by Christ, perfect in its own spiritual domain. It has a right to live according to the constitution given by its Founder. No government can rightfully prevent it from exercising its mission, which is to lead men's souls to God. The purpose of the Church is not to oppose governments, but rather to uphold them. The Church is attached to no special form of government, but is the powerful and consistent supporter of all just governments.

CHRIST'S PLAN

In the plan of Christ, Peter, one of the first Bishops, was appointed to direct and govern the infant Church.

The same plan has been continued down to our own day—one of the bishops of the world is weighted down with the responsibility entrusted to the Chief of the Apostles. Peter was the first Bishop of Rome, and whoever succeeds him in that office is likewise entrusted with the spiritual responsibility of the churches of all nations. As all bishops are united in the brotherhood of Christ, so all are likewise united in spiritual allegiance to their Brother of Rome. This allegiance is spiritual only. This has been said a thousand times from a thousand pulpits, and has been stated in thousands of pages of the press and in unnumbered volumes. But still the fear of the extent of the power of the Pope in matters pertaining to temporal government remains. Catholics can only entreat all fair-minded persons who have any apprehension on this score to become fully informed. Accurate and complete information is the only antidote for the bigotry and fear existing in the minds of those who regard the Pope as a menace to American institutions and liberty. There is not in the United States today a thoroughly informed man, be he Protestant, Jew or unbeliever, who is in the slightest degree apprehensive regarding the possible interference of the Pope in the affairs of the American Government. The spiritual allegiance of Catholics to the Pope can no more interfere with their loyalty to their government and to American institutions than does their allegiance to their parents and to their God.

ANOTHER QUESTION

Another question regarding the extent of the Pope's power which has been a source of anxiety to many fair-minded persons is: What would Catholics do, if they were in a majority in this country? We answer unhesitatingly. They would do precisely what they are doing in certain localities of the United States where they are now in the majority. In such communities neither priest nor bishop attempts to exert the slightest influence in matters of government; and, if either one should do so, his interference would be resented and rejected. I am certain that, if the Catholic bishop of this diocese were to attempt to dictate the political policy and to form the political opinions of the Catholics under his jurisdiction, he would be unani-

mously censured, and justly so, by the Catholic body. Such is their high regard for his spiritual leadership that, while conceding to him the right and duty of an American citizen, they would not tolerate him as a political leader. If—assuming the impossible—the Pope were to attempt to interfere in any way in the political affairs of our country, the greatest resentment would be manifested by Catholics of all classes.

Never in the history of the world has there been such absolute neutrality, such complete abstention from interference with the affairs of governments as that maintained by Pope Benedict XV during the World War. Never has there been a more unjust or revolting persecution of Christians than that which is now taking place at our very doors in Mexico; and yet the Holy Father, though his heart is bleeding at the sight of the sufferings of his children, says not a word which would encourage them to rise against a government which has only a presumptive title to legitimacy. The insults heaped upon the Pope through his personal representative, the outrages perpetrated against the bishops, the wanton murder of many innocent priests and thousands of the Faithful—all of these have failed to cause either the Pope or the bishops to counsel rebellion. How senseless to talk of possible interference on the part of the Pope with our American institutions when we have such examples of his neutrality, patience and Christ-like forbearance!

WHAT THE WELL-POSTED KNOW

I have no hesitation in saying that one of the greatest friends of the United States in the world today is Pope Pius XI. Thinking and informed men know:

(a) That he recognizes the authority of our government as having its source in God;

(b) That, as the universal teacher, he insists, on the authority of St. Paul, that Catholics respect and obey the civil power of the United States as emanating from God;

(c) That he teaches his Catholic subjects the right of all to hold private property;

(d) That he teaches them that they cannot embrace anarchy or any form of dangerous radicalism;

(e) That he teaches the employer to be just to his employees, and that the first charge on his business or industry is to provide a just wage for the workingmen;

(f) That he insists that the laborer must render a just day's service for the wage that he receives;

(g) That he teaches the sanctity of the home, as the unit of society, and that the officials of the Christian home are united not by a mere bilateral contract, nor merely by a contract which the government declares a status, but by an indissoluble sacramental bond of matrimony; that he rightly insists, on the authority of Christ, that there can be no stability to any government, if the home be destroyed and the sanctity of marriage denied.

One may study all the natural virtues and consider their highest demands. The Pope insists that these must be practiced, not only in the natural order, but also from a higher, supernatural motive.

ALIEN COLONIZATION

Many who mean to be in every sense fairminded still think of the Pope as one who stands for the perpetuation of alien groups and institutions in our country. This thought is farthest from the mind of the Holy Father. Not by any Papal mandate or counsel did great groups of Catholic laborers come to this country. They were, on the contrary, sought out by the giant industries of the nation as a means of insuring their financial success. Industry was not concerned about the Americanization of these groups, but somehow because of them the Pope and the Catholic Church were considered as alien to our country. Will not fairminded persons outside the Church realize that Pope Pius XI desires to have in the United States a native clergy, just as he wishes to have in every country of the world a native priesthood? His desire is that the best sons born of parents in this land shall be the leaders of the Church. These will know the people and the country of their origin; and they will serve religion all the better for this knowledge.

Does it not seem incomprehensible that all the sincere well-wishers of the country should not recognize the many ways in which Pope Pius XI seeks the good of the United

States, by the ennobling principles which he teaches, by the high standard of citizenship which he sets for the Catholic manhood of America—which he must do if the children of his Church are to be good Catholics? We hear much of Christian unity today. I cannot understand why the mind of the sincere and practical American Christian, who does not agree with the Catholic Church in point of doctrine, should not welcome with enthusiasm the Christian program sponsored by Pope Pius XI. An unprejudiced examination of this program, article by article, cannot but elicit this decision: I can, and should, work with Catholics in all those things that mean the good of my country.

CINCINNATI FREE FROM BIGOTRY

It gives me great pleasure to make these statements to the Catholic and non-Catholic public alike in this city, because I am convinced that no community in the United States is more singularly free from bigotry and religious intolerance than is Cincinnati. The sanity of our people condemns the propaganda of hatred, recognizing that the human heart is fashioned to love and not to hate; it brands as nonsense all the unfounded charges made against the Pope.

May the Catholics of this community become more and more all that the Holy Father would wish them to be, and may the non-Catholics become better acquainted with the personality and teachings of Pope Pius XI. May the fine spirit of harmony which exists in Cincinnati between Catholics and those of all other faiths be an example to other communities of our country!

The House of God

RT. REV. WILLIAM TURNER, D.D.

Sermon preached by the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Buffalo at the dedication of St. Mary's Church (Mobile, Ala.), which is located on the site of the church founded by the Rev. Abram Ryan, poet-priest of the Confederacy

WE are gathered here for the dedication and solemn opening of a beautiful and artistic temple of God. It is fitting that this dedication be celebrated by the solemn ceremonies which you have witnessed and by the imposing ritual of the pontifical Mass that is now in progress. We Catholics do not throw open our places of worship as others do. For non-Catholics the ceremonial opening is like the inauguration of a civic building, a public hall or a community meeting-place. There is music, there is preaching, there is prayer; but there is no blessing of the edifice outside and inside. There may be solemn invocation of the God in whose honor it has been built, but there is no invocation of the saints in stately litany. Above all there is no attempt to bring down into the edifice the Eucharistic King, to dwell henceforth as in a temple grand and beautiful, as fitting as human art and piety can make it for the continuance of His sacramental presence. By celebrating the Sacrifice of the Mass we offer the noblest, the most impressive and the most solemn act of worship and adoration. The Mass is, we believe, the greatest of all forms of prayer. It is, we also believe, the highest form of propitiation for the sins of mankind. And, for us, it is, above all, a commemoration, and more than a mere commemoration, of the Sacrifice of Calvary, whereby all men were saved. Whenever we make an effort to call forth the full force of our age-long liturgy, be it the dedication of a church, the distinctly Catholic celebration of a marriage, the ordination of a priest, the consecration of a bishop, the enthroning, in Catholic countries, of a sovereign, the coronation of a Pope, the last sad consignment

of our beloved ones to their place of everlasting rest, there is no ceremony in our whole repertoire, so to speak, more appropriate, more solemn, more effective, we believe, than the celebration of the Mass, such as that at which we are now assisting. The Mass is prayer; the Mass is adoration; the Mass is worship; the Mass is propitiation for sin; the Mass is, in a sense that we alone understand, an offering, the highest and the grandest we can make. It is a thank-offering for favors and graces received; it is an offering of atonement for sins committed; it is an offering, the highest offering, of our homage and our heartfelt petition for the things that we need most for body and soul. The Mass is the essential part of the ceremony here today, and those who attend it devoutly will reap far more benefit from it than from any impression they may get from the pomp and the majesty of the entire ritualistic observance.

A SACRED SPOT

For us, Catholics, our church is a holy place, a sacred spot set apart from all secular uses. It is sacred, first of all, in the feelings and the thoughts of the members of the parish. Hither the infant, newly born, is brought, and here he receives the Sacrament of Baptism and is made a child of Christ and a member of the Catholic Church. Here children of a more advanced age, but still children, receive at the hands of the bishop the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which they are, at the age in which they need it most, made stronger members of the Church, and in the spiritual warfare for the salvation of their souls, soldiers of Jesus Christ. Here the Sacrament of Penance is administered, to which we come with our sense of sin, of imperfections, of faults that we wish to correct, and here, in the confessional, the tribunal of God's mercy, we receive absolution and advice, and are sent away relieved, consoled and fortified against temptation. Here, at the altar rail is distributed the Bread of Life, the food and sustenance of the soul, that makes the Body and Blood of Christ to be, as it were, part of the spiritual fiber of the soul, the life, indeed, of the soul in the supernatural sense. Here in the sanctuary the young man and the young woman of the parish, before the altar and in the

presence of the priest, pledge their life-long love and fidelity in the holy Sacrament of Matrimony. Here, close to the altar, are carefully kept the Holy Oils that are taken, often hurriedly, to the bedside of the dying, to give strength and grace in the final struggle in the agony of death. And hither, at last, when death has called a member of the parish, the remains are borne, the solemn *Requiem* is chanted, the Holy Sacrifice is offered for the dear departed, and prayers are sent up to the Seat of Judgment before which we believe that the soul has already appeared. Here the final blessing is imparted before the mourning procession starts for the body's last place of rest.

CHURCH LIFE CENTER

Truly, from the cradle to the grave, the life of the member of a Catholic parish finds a spiritual and emotional center in the parish church. Around all the important events of the life of a Catholic, thoughts and memories are entwined that make this church a sacred place not only in the supernatural sense, but also in a sense that is plainly natural and human. How much richer is our Catholic inheritance than that of others. We love our church, as others do, because in it we find a place of prayer; we love it, as others do, because in it we hear preaching that helps us, that elevates us, that inspires us. We love it, as others do, because here we can listen to sacred music that lifts our hearts to God and clings to us through life in moments when prayer fails us and sermons seem forgotten. The haunting memory of a sacred hymn often heard in church has often been the last available link between a criminal and degraded present and a sweet, clean, Christian past. All this we have, as others have, to bind us to our parish church in true sentiment and affection; but over and above that, as our church is more intimately associated with our life and our family life as Catholics, we love it more tenderly, more fervently, more enduringly.

MORE POWERFUL REASON

But there is a still more powerful reason for thinking of our church as a sacred place. Here, day by day, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered, the Sacrifice that

is, in unbloody form, identical with the Sacrifice of Calvary. Here, day by day, He dwells hidden in the tabernacle who lay in the manger at Bethlehem, who dwelt peacefully, obediently and expectantly at Nazareth, who traveled up and down Judea, teaching and healing, who suffered and died on the cross and rose triumphant from the tomb on Easter morn. What pilgrim to the Holy Land can fail to feel the sacredness of Bethlehem, of Nazareth, and of each and every scene where Christ lived and walked? Who can stand unmoved on the sacred spot of Calvary in front of the shrine that marks the exact spot of the Holy Sepulchre? It is easy today to reach those scenes; but, in ages long gone by, comfort and health and even life were risked to reach the holy enthusiasm of the moment when one could stand on these sacred spots and feel by contact of place a nearer approach to the God made Man. Yet, he who has true faith, he who has Catholic faith, he who knows his Faith and lives according to his Faith, does not need to cross the ocean and the land in order to come near to his Lord. In every Catholic church, be it poor or be it rich, be it tiny or be it grand, be it plain or be it artistically beautiful, as yours is, he can find by faith the same thrill of awe that the pilgrim feels in the Holy Places. Quite literally, the Mohammedan must cast off his shoes when he enters the sacred places of his particular religion. Figuratively, we too, in reverence for the ground that we tread, cast off what is sordid, what is unclean, what is unworthy, when we enter the great Presence, when we approach Our Lord and Master in dwelling in our churches.

HOUSE OF GOD

Our church, we love to say, is the House of God. In it the sanctuary light guides us to Him. Here we can find Him whenever we seek Him, to pray, to give thanks, to seek solution of our problems and perplexities, to find consolation when all human sources of consolation have failed us. And who, especially in our large cities, has failed to observe how the Faithful take advantage of this source of help? Hardly for a moment during which the church is open is it entirely empty. Here or there, half hiding in a far-off corner, almost hidden by the shadows,

or kneeling on the steps of the altar rail, seemingly seeking to come as near as possible to the sacramental Presence, is someone lost, to all appearance, in supplication, in adoration, in love. And I often think that here we have reversed the well-known parable of the pharisee and the publican. It is not pride, but love, that brings the suppliant nearer. It is not consciousness of a disreputable occupation, as was that of the publican, that keeps the other worshipper afar, but humility, that is the timidity of an exceptional soul. It matters not, love urges one forward to the altar rail, humility holds the other back in the shadows of the rear of the church. Each is there in the attitude of a state of soul; each profits by it because each one is brought physically close to the Eucharistic King. There in the tabernacle He is hidden, and He alone knows how many favors He grants in such silent moments of devotion, how many sorrows He assuages, how many passions He stills, how many faltering resolutions He strengthens, how many hearts, weakened in the struggle with sin, He encourages to renewed effort. Oh, it is a side of our Catholic Church influence that few outsiders understand. Preaching they know; the singing of sacred songs they know; prayer, in a fashion, they know; but how can they know anything of this constant daily influence of our parish church, open to saint and sinner, and offering a solace for sin and suffering that only He can offer. He is here accessible to saint and sinner, to the pious and to the frivolous, to the simple and to the learned, to the poor and to the rich. It is, indeed, the House of God, to which all have a welcome entrance, and from which no one departs, we believe, even after a brief visit, without being richer in some spiritual sense, a better man, a better Christian, better fitted to renew in the world outside the struggle for his own salvation hereafter and peace and contentment and spiritual strength in his particular difficulties and trials here below.

And when the church building is closed at night and the last straggling visitor has departed, the light of the sanctuary lamp still sheds its rays through the darkened isles. The great city is hushed, for the most part in sleep. But, here and there, a soul is in agony, perhaps in the agony of death, or perhaps in the struggle with sin and

temptation. I like to think that the sacramental Christ is still watching over the parish from this, the spiritual center of parish life. It is so easy to reach Him, in the flash of a moment's thought. And is it not reasonable to believe that those who seek Him here by their bodily presence when they can, will try to reach Him in thought, when that is the only way? Yes, your church is the House of God, of God, who, above all, is our Friend. It is, then, the house of a friend. And who can visit the house of a friend without comfort and profit?

Friendship is sacred; friendship fitting into Christian fellowship, is noble, is grand. But, friendship with Jesus Christ, how exalted, how ennobling, how sustaining in the trials and troubles of life! He is our Friend. Here is His House, the house of a friend. You, Catholics, here present, realize that this is so. Not only today, but all the days that you dwell within this parish, here is your spiritual home, here is the house of your Friend. It is the House of God, of Christ, your Friend, and no one needs to tell you that here you are always welcome.

TRIBUTE TO MARY

And of Mary, the Mother of God, how could I on this occasion omit a mention, and, more than a casual mention? To her this parish was dedicated at its very foundation. To her as to its Patroness, it has been devoted all those years. And today it has been dedicated by solemn rite, under the same beloved title.

There may be those among my listeners who could follow more or less closely the thoughts I have put before you about Christ as the center of Catholic observance and Catholic worship. But, when I mention Mary, the Blessed Virgin, there may possibly arise in the mind of a listener here and there, an unfavorable reaction. Yet, we are all sons or daughters of women, of mothers, and, when the Catholic Church exalts Mary, the Mother of God, as the supreme type of womanhood and of motherhood, why should fault be found? Why should it be found by any honest man who honors his own mother, or, better still, honors motherhood in the woman whom he has taken to his heart and to a partnership in his life?

And, as devotion to Mary the Mother of God is noble in its response to what is best in the heart of every true and honest man, so is it in accord with the best traditions of our beloved country. Associated with the venturesome voyage of discovery is the name of our Heavenly Queen. For, who does not know that the admiral's ship, the chief vessel in that little fleet of three, was named the *Santa Maria*? And who can doubt that, in the course of the voyage, as each anxious day was reaching its close, and darkness drew its curtain over the trackless waste of waters, the words of the *Ave Maris Stella* were chanted by those Catholic sailors:

Bright Mother of our Maker, hail
Thou Virgin ever blest,
The ocean's Star, by which we sail
And gain the port of rest.

PATRONESS OF UNITED STATES

We acknowledge no king but Christ. We hail none as queen but Mary, Mother of God, to whom this country has paid homage for four hundred years and whose name, under many titles, is forever stamped on the country through its place-names in every State, almost in every county of the vast continent of America. No wonder that in 1846 the Fathers of the Baltimore Council should solemnly elect as patroness of the United States, Mary, conceived without sin.

From millions of Catholic hearts every day and many times a day, rises the sweetest of prayers, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners." Taught by our Divine Lord Himself, we pray, as all other Christians do, to "Our Father" in Heaven. Taught by our Church and inspired by an impulse that is reasonable, we pray to Him also through His Mother whom He loved on earth and whom, surely He will hear, when she pleads for us in Heaven. There is no more Catholic prayer than this, and few, we think, more beautiful. Because she is holy, because she is the Mother of God, we know that He will hear her. Because we are sinners, conscious of our own unworthiness, of our sins, our imperfections, our short-

comings, our faults, we ask her who was without sin to pray for us and to help us.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners." How often will that thoroughly Catholic prayer rise from this church to the seat beside the Eternal Throne where Mary, Queen of Angels sits, to whom this Church is dedicated.

LAUDS DIOCESE HEAD

I congratulate the people of this parish on the completion of this beautiful edifice. I congratulate the chief pastor of the diocese, your beloved bishop, on the addition of this noble temple of God to those already existing in his jurisdiction. I congratulate, above all, my friend of many years, your beloved pastor, who has reached, I believe, the happiest day in his long years in the priesthood, on this occasion of the dedication of St. Mary's. It is a long journey from the icebound shores of the inland fresh water sea of Lake Erie, to the milder coast of the Gulf, but if it were many times as long, the journey would have been undertaken to be with him today, to share in his celebration, to share in his joy and happiness, to share in what everyone, except his own modest self, regards as his personal triumph and the jubilee of his years of devotion and achievement.

When the cornerstone of this building was laid, the officiating prelate prayed that the work begun might be brought to a successful conclusion. That prayer has been heard. You have, indeed, a church of which you may be proud, and you can feel that God's blessing has been with you in this achievement. On that same occasion a prayer was likewise offered that God might bless all those who, in any way, had contributed or would, in the future contribute to the work; that He would bless them both in their temporal affairs and in their spiritual interests; that blessing, I hope has descended and will continue to descend on this whole parish. For such Churches as this are built today, not by the princely munificence of the few, but by the more meritorious zeal, generosity and sacrifice of all the parishioners. Therefore, I repeat today that prayer that was pronounced when the cornerstone was laid: May the Almighty and Eternal God con-

tinue His blessing on the priests and the people of this parish. May He grant you success and prosperity in all your personal undertakings. May He grant you peace and contentment and happiness in your homes. And, above all, may He, in this church and by reason of this church, pour out on all of you the abundance of His Divine Grace.

Scranton's Allegiance Pledged

V. REV. JAMES S. FAGAN

Address delivered by the V. Rev. Administrator of the Scranton Diocese at the banquet tendered to the Rt. Rev. Thomas C. O'Reilly, D.D., and reprinted from the "Catholic Light"

I FEEL it unnecessary to assure the recipient of the honors of this morning that the welcome which awaits him in his new home will be cordial, rousing and tremendous, and the loyalty which both laity and clergy are pledged to give will be of such sterling quality, that if ever forced to the test, no other bishop of this broad land will be sustained with such unfaltering allegiance as Scranton is prepared and disposed to yield to its new bishop.

Whilst this morning marks his retirement from the populous and prosperous Diocese with which he has been so actively identified for these many years, it likewise marks his ascension to the throne of another, where progress is the watch word, love of God and the neighbor the stimulant, and where we trust the zeal of its new bishop will be the instrument to raise Scranton to an eminence in the religious sphere that in the days to come will undoubtedly provoke the jealousy of even the progressive Diocese of Cleveland.

THE DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

The Diocese which Bishop O'Reilly has been assigned to rule was established just sixty years ago, and comprises the eleven counties of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

When the first bishop, Dr. O'Hara, took charge, he found but twenty-five priests, only a few churches worthy of the name, two schools conducted by Religious, and

a Catholic population of less than 50,000. Today the number of priests exceeds 300, 800 Religious are engaged in educational and charitable work; 29,000 pupils attend 60 elementary, 20 parochial high schools and 4 academies; 3 colleges conducted by Religious, two of them for women, are empowered to confer academic degrees, 5 hospitals, one of them for children, two orphanages, a boys industrial school and a home for the penniless aged, care for those whom misfortune has made the wards of charity. There has been an astounding increase in the population from less than 50,000 in 1868 to more than 300,000 in 1928.

You will observe from our educational record that our people are earnestly striving to comply with the desire of the Church in promoting Christian education.

As far back as 1852 the saintly Apostle of Northeastern Pennsylvania, a namesake of the bishop, Father John Vincent O'Reilly, opened a college for boys and an academy for girls in Susquehanna County, both of which prospered for years, until fire destroyed the one, and authority removed the other to a more favorable location.

The seed implanted in those pioneer days fructified into such splendid growth, that today our schools are recognized as being in the front rank of their class, our high schools, having won the approval of the State Department of Education on merit alone, have the privilege of matriculating their graduates in any university of the country.

Under the enlightened and aggressive leadership of our new bishop we hope to see our school system attain a standard that will be inferior to none in the country, and to achieve this purpose we solemnly pledge a support that will be neither divided nor diminished with the passing years.

Bishop O'Reilly's lot will be cast amongst a people, who for faith and devotion will challenge comparison with the most devout Catholics in the land. With no resources, save the meagre income that arduous toil provides, they have erected artistic temples and commodious schools, and true to their obligations to God and society they fill both. Respect for authority, reverence for the sacred ministry, and a disposition to respond generously to the frequent

demands of religion, distinguish the laity of the diocese whom the Holy See has committed to the care and conscience of Monsignor O'Reilly.

In terms of praise I can also speak of our devoted clergy. Precluding all desire to indulge in flattery, I will venture the observation, however, that those who know us—and we are quite widely known—will not hesitate to declare that the spirit of hospitality, so eloquently commended by the Apostle, glows fervently by every pastoral hearthstone, and under its benign influence, the stranger within our gates becomes a comrade and a brother, irrespective of the clime from whence he came or the tongue which reveals his race. The only passport to our hearts and homes is the garb he wears, and the authority he obeys.

Intellectually our priests are splendidly equipped for their work, their culture being broad and varied, as is the priesthood generally, whilst their zeal and its effects are apparent in the modern buildings we see on every side, and the flourishing societies that have grown up around the Sanctuary as a common center. The present condition of the diocese attests this truth.

The new bishop will reside in the most picturesque part of America. There mountain, plain and stream unite their varied beauties in a panorama unsurpassed by scenery anywhere in the world. The historic Susquehanna, meandering gently through the mountain pass and valley as it rolls in ripples to the sea, cleaving, as it were, the diocese in twain, recalls the days when its waters ran red with the blood of patriots, and the tapering willows drooping gracefully above its mossy banks gave shelter to the sons and daughters of France, whom frantic and pitiless revolution made the hapless children of exile.

THE THIRD BISHOP

To these people and this environment comes the third bishop of Scranton. Let me assure him he comes the Shepherd of a flock who will hear and heed his voice; follow him joyously and willingly to the pastures whither he leads them, and drink copiously of the waters he will strike from the rock of Faith.

True, clouds may gather where now the sun is bright-

est, but as the pathway through the rose garden is never free from thorns, neither will the life of the bishop be exempt from harassing cares and disappointments, it matters not what portion of the Vineyard he may be selected to govern.

Chosen from amongst men to be a High Priest, chosen by him, who alone can exercise that prerogative, the Vicar of Christ, bearing on his shoulders the mantle of Apostolic authority, on his brow the helmet of salvation, and in his hands the staff that symbolizes the government of immortal souls, the priest of yesterday becomes today the successor of John of Patmos and Paul of Tarsus and like them is humbly disposed to suffer privation, torment and death to fulfil the duties of the exalted office to which he has been called.

Like the rest of us, the bishop of Scranton will feel the pain of parting from his multitude of friends. Naturally his departure from this Queen City of the inland Sea, the only home he ever knew, will impose an ordeal that few would care to face; but if the loyalty of a devoted clergy, and the cooperation of truly filial laity will help assuage the grief that separation evokes, I solemnly promise both in full measure and overflowing for all the years that Heaven allots him control of the destinies of Scranton.

What Is Prayer?

RT. REV. MGR. JOHN L. BELFORD

Extract from sermon printed in the "Brooklyn Eagle"

PRAYER is so simple that it would seem to need no definition. Yet it is so profound that it defies adequate description. Perhaps the best way to define it is to call it a talk with God. It is the most natural thing in the world to speak to those whom we meet. Even a bird or a beast gets a word or a nod as we pass them by. The men we meet day after day in the cars and the shops receive at least a greeting, and, when we come to know them, we enter into conversation with them. It does not take long to find that there is no one so poor that he has not something to give. It may be the fruit of his wisdom

or his reading or his experience. It may or may not accord with our own ideas or convictions or hopes or interests, but what he says will promote thought and interest and perhaps affection.

Most of us believe in the existence of a personal God. We believe He is our Creator and sovereign Lord. No matter what our ideas may be about churches, we agree that God must possess eminently every faculty and power which His creatures possess and employ. He is the cause of all things. Now, no cause can transmit what it does not possess. God must, therefore, possess intelligence, volition and affection. Being perfect and supreme, He must possess them in perfection. While the mind and heart of man conform with the finite nature of a creature, they nevertheless conform with the nature of the Creator in this—they have for their object truth and goodness. They turn to God as naturally as the flower turns to the sun, but unlike the unthinking and unfeeling flower, they function with thought and emotion. Nor is the nature of man content with these interior intellectual and moral reactions. His whole nature responds, and he employs words and actions to express his reverence, gratitude, regrets and petitions to God, who is more than father and better than friend.

Knowledge leads to affection, and the end of affection is union. The more we think of God, the more do we see to admire, love and desire; the more reasons do we see for devotion, which is nothing more than service, and that, in turn, is the endeavor to do here and now what God wills and desires. In that we see the meaning of our Saviour's demand: "If you love Me take up your cross and follow Me."